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Good afternoon. My name is Tim Linehan. I chair the Connecticut chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club (CT-AMC). On behalf of the chapter's 8,000 members I'm here to speak in support of SB 831. We encourage the legislature to extend to municipal landowners the same liability protections that are available to the State and to private land owners.

During the past year CT-AMC volunteers led over 1,100 hikes, backpacks, cross country ski trips, flat water and white water paddles, bike rides, rock and ice climbs, trail maintenance work parties, river clean-ups, and informative seminars on conservation and environmental initiatives.

Continued access to the trails, river access points, cliffs, and areas of natural history that are located on municipal land is crucial to maintaining the number and variety of activities that our chapter offers to the residents of Connecticut.

The potential for liability concerns to result in the closure of municipal properties to recreation is no mere speculation. During my 20 years of involvement with the AMC, I have participated in a number of discussions with municipal landowners regarding closure of recreational areas – for rock climbing in particular. Potential liability has often been cited as a key reason why a town's risk managers advise otherwise supportive municipal agents to restrict access and activities. The decision in *Comway vs. Wilton* has been referenced as a reason for recreational closures.

One can understand a municipality's desire to protect its taxpayers from increased insurance premiums and deductibles, particularly when these costs would need to be absorbed by the smaller towns. It's unfortunate that these concerns have already resulted in restrictions on recreational access to some of our State's most notable natural resources. It would be a tremendous loss to the quality of life in Connecticut if *more* areas were closed to recreation due to increased liability concerns following the financial settlements of the past year.

On behalf of the 8,000 members of Connecticut AMC, I urge you to eliminate the risk of these potential future closures by providing municipalities with the same recreation use liability protection that is already available to other land owners.

Thank you.